

CLAIMS

I claim:

1. An imaging apparatus comprising:
  - a primary media feed tray;
  - a priority media feed tray;
  - a media feed mechanism configured to extract media from the priority feed tray and the primary feed tray; and
  - a priority media release device configured to selectively block media in the priority feed tray from the media feed mechanism, and admit media in the priority feed tray to the media feed mechanism.
2. The imaging apparatus of claim 1, and wherein the priority media release device comprises a priority media release member selectively moveable from a first position to block media in the priority feed tray from the media feed mechanism, to a second position to admit media in the priority feed tray to the media feed mechanism.
3. The imaging apparatus of claim 2, and wherein the priority media release device further comprises a media release member actuator configured to selectively move the media release member between the first and the second positions.
4. The imaging apparatus of claim 3, and further comprising a processor in signal communication with the media release member actuator, and wherein the processor is configured to, upon receipt of a print job designating the use of media from the priority media tray, generate a priority media release actuation signal to actuate the media release member actuator.
5. The imaging apparatus of claim 4, and further comprising a media detection device configured to detect the presence of media in the priority media tray, to generate a media detection signal in response thereto, and to transmit the media detection signal to the processor, and further wherein the processor is configured to generate the priority media release actuation signal only upon receipt of the media detection signal.
6. The imaging apparatus of claim 2, and wherein the priority media release member is configured to be rotationally moved between the first and section positions.

7. The imaging apparatus of claim 2, and wherein the priority media release member is configured to be transitionally moved between the first and section positions.

8. The imaging apparatus of claim 1, and wherein the priority media release device comprises a plurality of priority media release member selectively moveable from a first position to block media in the priority feed tray from the priority media feed mechanism, to a second position to admit media in the priority feed tray to the priority media feed mechanism.

9. An imaging apparatus comprising:  
a primary media feed tray;  
a priority media feed tray;  
a media feed mechanism configured to extract media from the priority feed tray and the primary feed tray;  
a processor;  
a priority media release device under control of the processor and configured to admit media resident in the priority feed tray into the media feed mechanism when authorized by the processor.

10. The imaging apparatus of claim 9, and further comprising a computer readable memory device in signal communication with the processor, the computer readable memory device containing a priority media release device actuation routine configured to check for a predetermined condition and, when the predetermined condition is present, to instruct the processor to authorize the priority media release device to admit media from the priority feed tray into the media feed mechanism.

11. The imaging apparatus of claim 10, and wherein the priority media release device actuation routine is configured to check a print job file for the predetermined condition, and wherein the predetermined condition comprises the designation of use of media from the priority media tray.

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12. The imaging apparatus of claim 10, and further comprising a priority media detection device configured to detect the presence of media in the priority media tray, to generate a media detection signal in response thereto, and to transmit the media detection signal to the processor, and wherein the predetermined condition comprises the presence of media in the priority media tray.

13. The imaging apparatus of claim 11, and further comprising a priority media detection device configured to detect the presence of media in the priority media tray, to generate a media detection signal in response thereto, and to transmit the media detection signal to the processor, and wherein the predetermined condition further comprises the presence of media in the priority media tray.

14. An imaging apparatus comprising:  
a primary media feed tray;  
a priority media feed tray;  
a media feed mechanism configured to extract media from the priority feed tray and the primary feed tray; and  
a priority media release device comprising a media release member which is moveable between a first position wherein the release member blocks media in the priority feed tray from the media feed mechanism, and a second position wherein the release member admits media in the priority feed tray to the media feed mechanism.

15. The imaging apparatus of claim 14, and wherein the media release member is rotatably moveable between the first position and the second position.

16. The imaging apparatus of claim 15, and wherein the priority media release device further comprises a rotary actuator attached to the media release member to move the release member between the first and second positions.

17. The imaging apparatus of claim 14, and wherein the media release member is translatable moveable between the first position and the second position.

18. The imaging apparatus of claim 17, and wherein the priority media release device further comprises a linear actuator attached to the media release member to move the release member between the first and second positions.

19. The imaging apparatus of claim 14, and wherein the priority media feed tray defines a priority media feed path, and the media release member protrudes into the priority media feed path when the media release member is in the first position.

20. The imaging apparatus of claim 14, and wherein the priority media release device further comprises a plurality of elongated release members which are moveable between the first position and the second position.

21. A system to provide imaging media from a priority media tray in an imaging apparatus for imaging of an image file, comprising:

an applications program configured to generate the image file under the control of a user, and to selectively apply a media type designation to the image file indicating the priority tray as the source of the imaging media;

a printer driver program configured to generate a print job file from the image file, and to apply a priority media release instruction to the print job file when the image file indicates the priority tray as the source of the imaging media, and wherein the priority media release instruction is configured to cause imaging media from the priority media tray to be released to the imaging apparatus for imaging of the image file by the imaging apparatus.

22. The system of claim 21, and wherein the applications program is configured to allow a user to apply the media type designation to the image file indicating the priority tray as the source of the imaging media.

23. The system of claim 21, and wherein the applications program is configured to automatically apply the media type designation to the image file indicating the priority tray as the source of the imaging media.

24. The system of claim 23, and wherein the media type designation is automatically applied to the image file when the image to be imaged is one of an envelope or a label.

25. A method of providing imaging media to an imaging apparatus to allow the imaging apparatus to use an image file to generate an image onto the imaging media, comprising:

- providing the imaging media in a priority media tray;
- providing the image file with an imaging media release command; and
- releasing the imaging media from the priority media tray to the imaging apparatus only when the image file has an imaging media release command.

26. The method of claim 25, and further comprising imaging the image file onto the released imaging media.

27. The method of claim 25, and further comprising:

- generating the image file using an application software program;
- designating a selected imaging media type for the image file using the application software program; and
- wherein the image file is automatically provided with the imaging media release command as a result of designating the selected imaging media type.

28. The method of claim 25, and wherein the image file is first image file, the method further comprising:

- providing the imaging media in a primary media tray;
- providing a second image file, the second image file not having an imaging media release command; and
- feeding imaging media from the primary media tray and imaging the second image file onto the imaging media fed from the primary media tray.

1 29. A method of processing a print job file having an image file portion, comprising:  
2 providing an imaging apparatus having a primary media tray and a priority media  
3 tray, each media tray configured to contain imaging media;  
4 providing the print job file;  
5 checking the print job file for the presence of a priority tray media release  
6 command;  
7 checking for the presence of imaging media in the priority media tray; and  
8 when imaging media is present in the priority media tray, and the priority tray  
9 media release command is present in the print job file, releasing the imaging media from  
10 the priority media tray to the imaging apparatus, and imaging the image file portion on  
11 the released imaging media.

12  
13 30. The method of claim 29, and further comprising:  
14 when the priority tray media release command is not present in the print job file,  
15 and imaging media is present in the priority media tray, not releasing the imaging media  
16 from the priority media tray, and imaging the image file portion on media from the  
17 primary media tray.

18  
19 31. The method of claim 29, and further comprising:  
20 when the priority tray media release command is present in the print job file, and  
21 imaging media is not present in the priority media tray, saving the print job file in a  
22 memory device.

23  
24 32. The method of claim 31, and further comprising:  
25 re-checking for the presence of imaging media in the priority media tray; and  
26 when imaging media is present in the priority media tray, retrieving the print job  
27 file from the memory device, releasing the imaging media from the priority media tray to  
28 the imaging apparatus, and imaging the image file portion on the released imaging  
29 media.